(c) whether the Nepalese currency in the cities is legal tender and is interchangeable with Indian currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) As per information furnished by RBI, some amount of Nepalese currency does circulate in the Indian cities touching Nepal border on account of overland trade.

(c) No, Sir.

CAG's report on disinvestment of BALCO

†858. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Comptroller and Auditor General of India had objected on many points in its preliminary report on disinvestment of BALCO;

(b) if so, the details of the points objected;

(c) whether a charge for fraud of Rs. 320 crores has also been made; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) had made certain observations in its Draft Inspection Report dated 4th October 2001 on disinvestment of Government Equity in BALCO. Government's reply thereto has been sent to the Office of the C&AG on 7th December, 2001.

Loans to fishermen struck by Tsunami

859. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after four months since the Tsunami struck the Tamil Nadu coast and washed away a prosperous economy, the fishermen even now are unable to return to their profession as they have nothing to provide in the form of surety nor do they make any profits to pay back loans;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that although Government have offered assistance to fishermen in the form of loans, they are not coming forward to take loans for various reasons; and

(c) if so, the action proposed thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) According to the information furnished by Indian Overseas Bank, the Convenor, State Level Banker's Committee for Tamil Nadu, fishermen in Tsunami affected Tamil Nadu coast by and large have returned to their fishing operations after availing credit facilities from Banks, subsidy from Govt. and assistance from NGOs. Banks do not insist any collateral security or third party guarantee for loan assistance to the Tsunami affected fishermen under Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package (RGRP). Under Credit cum Subsidy scheme of RGRP there is provision of 18 months repayment holiday to enable the fishermen to meet their immediate livelihood needs. With the initial repayment holiday as above, it is expected that the fishermen will not have any difficulty in repaying the Bank loans over a period of 7 years thereafter.

(b) and (c) Initially the fishermen were insisting on providing the entire assistance by way of grant and were reluctant to avail loans. Later on the fishermen had started applying for loans under "RGRP for Tsunami Affected Area". As regards mechanized boats while the major chunk of the fishermen availed bank loans, some have utilized their own resources with subsidy to repair the boats. With regard to Fibre Glass Reinforced Plastic Boats (FRP Boats), the demand for bank loans is very limited due to the free assistance provided by NGOs for repair and replacement FRP boats by way of grant. As on 22.07.2005 in Tamil Nadu as a whole loans amounting to Rs. 4786 lakh have been sanctioned to 1862 fishermen who applied for loans.

Terms of World Bank Loan for implementation of Slum Sanitation Programme

860. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Urban Development have moved the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance to approach